



Wabash River Heritage Corridor Commission

Pres. – Brendan Kearns

V. Pres. – Arin Shaver

Secretary – Dale Brier

May 10, 2023, 1:00 pm ET

Waapaahski Siippiwi Mounds Park
9098 W Co Rd 825 N
Fairbanks, IN 47849

Meeting Agenda

Call to Order, Introductions, Announce Proxies, Open Agenda

Review and Approval of March 1, 2023 Minutes

Comments from Visitors or Guests

DNR Finance Report (Dale Brier)

Old Business

- ✦ Strategic Planning of the Commission
- ✦ Previous funding requests
 - WRHCF sponsorship requests
 - Splash on the Wabash
 - Riverfest
 - Pedal, Paddle, and Play
 - Amenity Fund requests
 - LC Nature Park Project
 - Wayside Area Landscaping
 - Pollinator and Native Species Area Project
 - Fairbanks Landing & Merom – Adopt a Ramp
 - Knox County Parks Interpretive Signage

New Business

- ✦ New funding requests
 - Exploring & Restoring the Upper Wabash River

Announcements & General Reminders/Discussion

- ✦ Other county or special event announcements, Festival dates, etc.
- ✦ Final comments by Commission members, alternates, and guests

July Meeting: July 12, 2023 at 1:00pm ET in Cass County

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Wabash River Heritage Corridor Commission
Pres. – Brendan Kearns V. Pres. – Arin Shaver
Secretary – Dale Brier

March 1, 2023, 1:00 pm ET
Turkey Run State Park
Turkey Run Inn
8102 East Park Road
Marshall, IN, 47859

Meeting minutes

Attendance

Voting Members Present:

Adams County - Randy Lehman
Allen County - Allen Hurst (Proxy)
Carroll County - Dan McCain
Cass County - Arin Shaver
Fountain County - Tim Shumaker
Gibson County - Bill Knowles
Huntington County - Dave Hacker
Knox County - Rhonda Foster
Parke County - Penny Cox
Posey County - Ralph Weinzapfel
Sullivan County - Ellen Donker
Tippecanoe County - Madison Neher (Alt)
Vermillion County - Les Zimmerman
Vigo County - Brendan Kearns
Wabash County - Keith Poole (Alt)
Wells County - Doug Sundling
DNR - Dale Brier

Guests:

Brenda Hardy - Fountain Co Alt
David McCain
Kevin Meyer - Knox Co Alt
Lindsey Bishop - Parke County SWCD
Mike Tetrault - Carroll Co Alt
Phil Carter - Vigo Co SWCD
Phil Cox - Parke Co Alt
Ralph Leck
Tim Watson - INDOT

Counties not represented:

Miami County
Warren County

Call to Order, Introductions, Announce Proxies, Open Agenda

President Brendan Kearns called the meeting to order at 1:00pm ET. Kearns asked for new members to introduce themselves. The new alternate for Tippecanoe County, Madison Neher, introduced herself and noted that she worked for the Wabash River Enhancement Corporation (WREC) under Stan Lambert. The new alternate for Carroll County, Mike Tetrault, also introduced himself.

Kearns requested to change the agenda to have the funding requests presented before the grant criteria discussion. He also recommended having comments from visitors and guests later in the meeting to just before ending announcements. The commission agreed.

Dale Brier urged the commission to gather quickly outside for their retreat photo. The group photo was taken outside and the commission reconvened.

Allen Hurst announced he was proxy for Allen County.

Review and Approval of January 11, 2023 Minutes

Tim Shumaker made a motion to approve the minutes as written. Rhonda Foster seconded and the motion passed.

DNR Finance Report

Brier presented the DNR finance report (attached.) The revenue for fiscal year 2023 was over \$175,000 which was more than previous years. The entirety of the fund had over \$655,000. Brier noted the budget bill was moving forward that should allow for budget augmentations to the Wabash fund.

Zimmerman asked if there was a congress person they should contact to help ensure the bill to allow fund augmentation passes. Brier answered the lack of augmentation capability was more of an error, and there was no need to reach out to fix the oversight.

Kearns motioned to accept the finance report. Keith Poole seconded and the motion passed.

Old Business

Previous funding requests

Bluffton Health and Wellness Series

Sundling summarized that the Bluffton Parks Department had requested \$1,000 for their series of events throughout 2023. Arin Shaver motioned to approve the sponsorship. Hacker seconded and the motion carried.

Experience Otter Creek

Kearns recapped the Otter Creek request noting the \$1,000 was for an entertainment component, emphasizing reaching families and youth.

Shaver asked how far away the event was from the Wabash River. Kearns answered a few miles as the crow flies or about seven miles via water. Shaver asked if the event was raising funds or if it was solely educational. Kearns replied it was educational only.

Zimmerman asked if there were policy guidelines preventing sponsorship of this event due to its distance away from the Wabash River. Brier answered there was no stipulation requiring events to be on or near the river. However, his concern was that it opened a dangerous door for sponsorships as the event was on Otter

Creek, not the Wabash River. Three quarters of the state flows into the Wabash River and sponsoring this event may set a bad precedent for all tributaries.

Randy Lehman said that tributaries should be OK, as the goal is to improve the Wabash River. The water quality of tributaries directly impacts the Wabash River. Hacker replied that the White River outside of Indianapolis is a tributary of the Wabash River but is 50 miles away. Would an event in Indianapolis qualify? Lehman said it should.

Brier explained that historically the commission had wanted to keep funds close to the river and previous grants had mile requirements. The commission had previously agreed there need not be a specific distance for sponsorship monies, however Brier warned that the commission awards 12-18 events per year. If the tributary door is opened, that number may balloon up to 20-30. If more money is awarded for sponsorships, less money will be available for grants.

Kearns noted that IDEM identified Otter Creek as having among the highest levels of E. Coli in the state of Indiana and the event location is at the closest public place on Otter Creek to its convergence with the Wabash River.

Zimmerman expressed support for the sponsorship because of the outreach the event would have and the direct bearing that would have on the Wabash River.

Lehman noted that the commission should hear these requests on a case-by-case basis. If too many sponsorship requests spawned from allowing this one, as Brier had cautioned, it would be on the commission to reel it back. Hacker said it would be difficult to deny a request if the precedent is set allowing tributaries.

Zimmerman noted the Wabash River would be in the curriculum of the event. Brier responded that was an assumption and may not be the case. Kearns read the event description and the Wabash River was not mentioned.

Tim Watson, agreeing that tributary water quality affects the Wabash River, asked about section two of the policy which allows sponsorships for large regions or the entire state. Brier explained the intent of section two was for multi-county projects the ability to request more than \$1,000, not to expand the Wabash corridor.

Sundling noted the commission was not partisan and was demonstrably dominated by common sense. He agreed with Lehman noting the commission would be responsible handling sponsorship requests on a case-by-case basis and would not let it get out of hand.

Keith Poole noted the verbiage 'along the Wabash River' as found in the policy can be hard to define, and perhaps it should read 'adjacent to the Wabash River.' The question becomes how each person defines along.

Zimmerman made a motion to approve the sponsorship request for \$1,000. Rhonda Foster seconded the motion. With 14 yays, 4 nays, and 1 abstain, the motion passed.

New Business

New Funding Requests

WRHCF sponsorship Requests

Splash on the Wabash

Hacker presented the event on behalf of the Historic Forks of the Wabash and Boy Scout troop 130. They work with the Army Corp of Engineers to provide a one-day float on the Wabash River which usually sees over 600 participants. Transportation and a limited number of tubes are provided. The request was for \$1,000.

Riverfest

Neher presented the Riverfest event on behalf of the WREC. It is a free community festival on the banks of the Wabash River in Lafayette. There is a whole slew of activities including kayak races, a 5K, fishing, guided hikes, and more. Over 800 people attended the previous year. The request was for \$1,000.

Pedal, Paddle, and Play

Kyle Quandt virtually presented the event on behalf of the Northeast Indiana Water Trails (NEIWT) organization. It invites participants to get out on the water and explore, which includes a scavenger hunt. An after-party takes place at Promenade Park in Fort Wayne that sees 300-400 people show up. The money raised from Pedal, Paddle, and Play goes to manage the NEIWT website and helps pay for their signing and wayfinding program. The request was for \$1,000.

Kearns asked if they would have a river specific beer this year. Quandt replied that the Peoples Brewing Company made a Clean Waters IPA. 3.5% of sales of the Clean Waters IPA in Northeast Indiana are donated to NEIWT. The same portion of sales of those sold in the Lafayette area go towards the Big Pine Watershed organization.

Amenity Fund Requests

LC Nature Park Project

Quandt presented the project on behalf of LC Nature Park, the location of a previous WRHCC meeting. The park is a 300-acre Nature Preserve with buffalo and elk that opened to the public three years ago. The monies would help with their interpretive signage along the walking trails. The WRHCC logo would be

displayed on the three Little River Valley habitat signs. The signs were of museum grade quality and cost estimates were around \$4,000 per sign. Quandt hoped to assist the park find a better deal. The request is for \$1,000.

Wayside Area Landscaping

Weinzapfel presented the landscaping project at the Atheneum grounds on behalf of Historic New Harmony and the University of Southern Indiana (USI). Landscaping includes river rock, steppingstones, shrubs, and planters. These would be placed around interpretive signs already present at the site.

Sundling asked if the plants would be native. Weinzapfel did not have the answer, instead noting that Carrie Parmenter would know specifics and could answer later.

Fairbanks Landing & Merom – Adopt a Ramp

Ellen Donker presented the project on behalf of Waapaahski Mounds Park. The project aims to set up two trash collection sites at the Fairbanks Landing boat ramp and the Merom boat ramp. The trash will be maintained by volunteers. The cans would be removed as flooding occurs. The DNR Fish and Wildlife asked the organization to join the Adopt-a-Ramp program to receive permission to install the cans. Donker provided cost estimates for the needed materials including signs, trash cans, padlocks, bolts, chains, and bags. The request was for \$805.44.

Pollinator and Native Species Area Project

Sundling presented the request on behalf of the Friend of the Ouabache State Park. A 3-acre plot in Ouabache State Park had been cleared of Wisteria and the friends group wished to plant native plants in the now cleared area. Funds will help with the purchase of seeds, plants, or stabilization efforts. The estimated total project cost was about \$10,000. The request is for \$1,000.

Lehman noted the desired spot is an area with no parking and guests would drive past it. Sundling replied that there is a trail nearby and with this project's completion there was a plan to have a side trail circle through the spot.

Knox County Parks

Rhonda Foster presented a project on behalf of the Knox County Parks Department. Funds would help purchase Wabash River interpretive signs between the park and the rivers' bank. The request was for \$1,000. Brier asked what the sign cost estimates were. Foster replied they were around \$4,000 per sign.

Historic Preservation Grant Round Criteria

Brier presented the grant round criteria draft as prepared by the Division of Preservation and Archeology (DHPA.)

Kearns asked when the commission would give their input on the criteria. Brier replied input had already been received via the grants subcommittee and their input was reflected in the presented draft.

Keith Poole read a letter, written by Michael Beauchamp, which expressed concern the criteria was too constrictive requiring eligible projects to be on, or eligible for, the state registry of historic places. Wabash County had only two sites that would qualify.

Dan McCain also expressed concern that a project in Delphi may not be eligible as it was not on the state registry of historic places. Brier and Hurst noted there were different types of eligible projects and not all needed the designation. McCains proposed idea would be eligible.

Zimmerman noted the grants sub committee worked with DHPA to create this draft. There are no eligible projects in Vermillion this round, but he was OK with that. The grant money was being shared all along the Wabash River for different purposes. This time for historic purposes instead of recreation. It was someone else's turn.

Kearns motioned to approve the criteria with the stipulation that Brier submit Beauchamp's letter to DHPA for consideration. Shaver seconded and motion passed unanimously.

Hacker suggested limiting the grant round to \$400,000 which would allow another grant round to occur sooner. Brier argued it would be more efficient to use most available funds, to the tune of \$600,000, for the upcoming grant round. He further cautioned staff may not be available to do a recreational grant round in the near future.

Shaver motioned to have the grant round monies available to \$400,000 and Hacker seconded. The motion passed with one nay.

Comments from Guests and Visitors

Lindsey Bishop from the Parke County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) introduced herself. She attended the meeting to learn what the commission did and was thankful for the invitation.

Ralph Leck, a citizen from Terre Haute, had helped create a committee to establish a Fort Harrison Park and river walk in Terra Haute. He provided background information and history on the project.

David McCain, from Carroll County, expressed the importance of historic bridges within the Wabash River corridor. He stated the WRHCC Corridor plan said to prioritize bridges and hoped the WRHCC will help fund future bridge projects.

Phil Carter, a chair on the Vigo County SWCD, thanked Kearns for the invitation to the meeting.

Announcements & General Reminders/Discussion

Foster reported that Knox County Parks was looking for a project design engineer.

Hacker had WRHCC stickers available if members wanted them.

Zimmerman informed the commission of the Clean Water Indiana initiative. SWCD's for the past 25 years received \$10,000 per year, per district. The initiative sought a considerable raise to that amount, asking for an additional 8.6 million. The house ways and means committee had passed it with 3 million added to that line item.

Adjournment

Kearns adjourned the meeting at 3:15pm.

48686 Wabash River Heritage Corridor Fund

FY23 as of 1.31.2023

<u>Account</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Expense</u>	<u>Revenue</u>
431401	AD - Oil and Gas royalty along		\$ 175,125.06
510101	Payroll Salaries & Wages	\$ 4,820.00	
516002	FICA Regular	\$ 292.00	
516005	Payroll Medicare	\$ 68.00	
517003	Payroll Perf St Pd Em CONtr	\$ 145.00	
517005	Payroll PERF State Share	\$ 540.00	
518161	Anthem Trad 2	\$ 485.00	
518606	Payroll Life Insurance	\$ 2.00	
518796	Payroll Anthem Dental Trad	\$ 24.00	
518800	Anthem Vision	\$ 4.00	
518901	Payroll Employee Assistance	\$ 2.00	
519006	Payroll Long Term Disability	\$ 48.00	
519503	Payroll Def Comp - StateMatch	\$ 31.00	
519722	HSA Health Savings Acct 2	\$ 117.00	
571010	Grants - Cities	\$ -	
571100	Grants - Counties	\$ -	
592022	AdmOp-Late Payment Interest	\$ 10.00	
595110	InState Travel - Mileage	\$ 175.00	
595180	InState Travel - Board Member	\$ 5,831.00	
599036	AdmOp-PostageMeter/Potage	\$ 43.00	
599116	AdmOp-Event Sponsor	\$ 11,000.00	

DNR payroll	\$ 6,578.00
Grants	\$ -
Travel Costs	\$ 6,016.00
Operating	\$ 43.00
Sponsorships	\$ 11,000.00
Total FY23 Expenses	\$ 12,637.00

Active Fund Balance:		
	7/1/2022	\$ 159,128.00
FY23 Expenses		\$ 23,637.00
FY23 as of 1.31.2023		\$ 135,491.00

Active Fund Balance	\$ 135,491.00
Legal Fund Reserve	\$ 519,699.06
Total WHRCF Funds	\$ 655,190.06
